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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOST).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

June 14, 2016.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE BOST to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2016, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

END HUNGER NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, the 1996 welfare reform law imposed new limitations on able-bodied adults without dependents, known as ABAWDs, receiving food assistance through the SNAP program. These 18- to 49-year-olds who do not have children or serve as caretakers to other individuals have access to SNAP for only 3 months in any 3-year period when they are not employed at least half time or are in a work training program.

It is important to note that the law doesn't require States to offer job training programs—most do not—and SNAP recipients have their benefits cut off after 3 months even if they are searching for work or are working less than 20 hours per week.

So who are the ABAWDs?

While some on the other side of the aisle tend to stereotype these vulnerable adults, the truth of the matter is there is no one face to the ABAWD population. This is a very diverse group. About 45 percent are women. Close to one-third are over 40 years old. Many have limited educational experiences, with more than 80 percent having no more than a high school education or a GED. Some have mental health issues, difficult histories of substance abuse, or are ex-offenders who have nowhere else to turn, and as many as 100,000 are veterans.

These childless adults on SNAP are extremely poor and often experience chronic homelessness. They often turn to SNAP as a safety net when they lose their jobs, when their hours at work get cut, or when their wages are so low they are unable to make ends meet. Most childless adults on SNAP who are able to work do. At least 25 percent of these households work while receiving SNAP, and about 75 percent work in the year before or after receiving benefits. While many struggle with job insecurity, among those households that worked in a typical month while receiving SNAP or at some point during the following year, about half worked full time for 6 months or more in the year after they were on the program.

Because childless adults receive only limited government assistance, access to SNAP becomes a critical lifeline to these Americans who are living in poverty. After these vulnerable adults leave the SNAP program, research suggests that many continue to face incredible hardship. While some continue to struggle to find jobs, former SNAP

recipients who work tend to earn low wages that keep them in poverty. They struggle to get the healthy food they need. Often, they must eat less or skip a meal entirely because they simply have no money with which to purchase food.

A provision in the 1996 welfare law allows States to suspend the 3-month limit in areas with high and sustained unemployment. In the aftermath of the Great Recession, Democratic and Republican Governors requested and received waivers from the 3-month limit, and the limit has not been in effect in most States during the past several years. But as the economy continues to recover, fewer areas qualify for waivers despite the fact that many of these vulnerable Americans still struggle to find long-term, stable jobs. As these waivers expire this year, it is expected that more than 500,000 and as many as 1 million of our poorest neighbors will be cut off from SNAP. Thousands already began losing their benefits on April 1 as 23 States began implementing the time limits for the first time since before the recession.

These waivers are providing support as they were intended to: helping our communities overcome hardship and providing a lifeline to vulnerable adults who are unable to find work during difficult times. So I am greatly disappointed by the proposals offered by Speaker RYAN to eliminate the ability of States to request these waivers during times of economic hardship.

Mr. Speaker, cutting off food assistance for vulnerable adults who are unable to make ends meet is a rotten thing to do, and it only makes hunger worse in our communities. How does making hunger worse make it easier to get a job? Every single congressional district is home to Americans who are struggling with hunger. The hardships they face are exactly why such cuts are so cruel. These proposals are mean-spirited, political documents that are

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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